

EASTER ISLAND FOUNDATION

DA PREZ SEZ:

THESE ARE CONTROVERSIAL TIMES for Easter Island researchers. In 2002, a paper by Paul Rainbird (*World Archaeology* 33(3):436-451) raised an issue about the extent of ecological change and the timing of societal collapse in ancient Rapa Nui society. He proposed that both severe environmental and cultural changes were triggered by European intervention. This is in contrast to the historically accepted scenario that puts forth an internal collapse generated from a variety of ecological and demographic problems, well before contact with non-Polynesians. Just recently, another strike at conventional thinking has emerged with an equally bold assertion put forth by Terry Hunt, University of Hawai'i. In a paper published in *Science* (311:1603-1606) he asserts that Rapa Nui was settled ca. AD 1200, about 400 years later than current opinion and, if true, it has significant implications for the rate of population growth, the tempo of cultural development, and the rapidity of habitat alteration. Both of these hypotheses require careful evaluation and the next international conference on Rapa Nui and the Pacific (to be held at Gotland University, Sweden, in 2007) will provide a setting to discuss these propositions. Careful reasoning and problem-oriented research will eventually sort out the competing interpretations of the evidence. Until that time, it is good to grapple with alternate scenarios that challenge a nearly 50 year old homeostasis about the chronology of key events in Rapa Nui prehistory.

Christopher M. Stevenson, President EIF

Progress

by
J. Douglas Porteous

*All great events ... in world history reappear
...the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.*

Karl Marx (1852)

I
Rapa Nui Tragedy

Hard to be Rapanui
Wondering why
Grandfathers felled the final tree
To move the far-from-last moai

II
Cosmic Farce

The earth is dying by degrees—
Ecocatastrophe—
As patiently we search the skies
For a facsimile.

THE EIF IS HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE our current scholarship winners, Daniela Macarena Araki González, Antonio Fernando Muñoz Tuki, and Tiare Maeva Carolina Aguilera Hey.

Daniela is in her 2nd year of kindergarten/nursery school education at Central Valley Professional Institute and is the winner of the Nicholas Haoa Sr. Scholarship Award; Antonio is a 2nd year law student at University Mariano Egaña; he won the Foundation's scholarship award. Tiare is in her 3rd year of studying law at the National University Andrés Bello, and she was awarded the Easter Island Foundation's Director's Award.

The two students who are recipients of the Wiegand Scholarship awards are on-going winners. They are Juana Atan and Ioan Soler Hotu. Juana is studying medicine in Argentina and Ioan studies computer technology in California.

The EIF extends congratulations to all Scholarship recipients. We are very proud of their achievements and grateful that we can have a small part in helping them go forward with their future careers.